IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 12, 13, 18, and 19, and amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for distributing solid particles into a tube, comprising:

a center member; and

a plurality of damper members connected to the center member, each one of the damper members forming a loop that extends in a radial direction away from the center member toward an inside diameter of the tube, wherein each of the plurality of damper members includes a locking portion that attaches a longitudinal member around the center member, and wherein the longitudinal member passes back through a section of the locking portion to form the loop.

2. (Currently Amended) A method for distributing solid particles into a tube, comprising:

positioning a loading tool in an interior of the tube, the loading tool having a center member and a plurality of damper members connected to the center member, each one of the damper members forming a loop that extends in a radial direction away from the center member toward an inside diameter of the tube, wherein each of the plurality of damper members includes a locking portion that attaches a longitudinal member around the center member, and wherein the longitudinal member passes back through a section of the locking portion to form the loop;

filling the tube with the solid particles, wherein the solid particles contact at least some of the plurality of damper members; and

removing the loading tool from the tube as the solid particles fill the tube.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising utilizing a sensor to communicate the position of a second portion of the center member to a first portion of the center member.

4. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for distributing solid particles into a tube~~ of claim 3, wherein the second portion of the center member is located at a lowest extremity of the center member.

5. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for distributing solid particles into a tube~~ of claim 3, wherein the first portion of the center member is located at an upper portion of the center member.

6. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for distributing solid particles into a tube~~ of claim 2, further comprising breaking the center member into sections as the loading tool is removed from the tube.

7. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for distributing solid particles into a tube~~ of claim 2, further comprising breaking the center member into sections at an eyelet and mating shackle within the center member as the loading tool is removed from the tube.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the center member comprises at least one of a wire, a chain, and a rod.

9. – 10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the plurality of damper members are made of plastic.

12. – 13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the center member comprises at least one of a wire, a chain, and a rod.

15. – 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the plurality of damper members are made of plastic.

18. – 19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein removing the loading tool includes pulling the loading tool upwards between catalyst ~~filing~~ filling sequences without removing the loading tool during the catalyst ~~filing~~ filling sequences.

21. (Previously Presented) A method for distributing solid particles into a tube, comprising:

positioning a loading tool in an interior of the tube, the loading tool having a center member and a plurality of damper members connected to the center member and arranged on the center member to provide substantially circumferential coverage along a longitudinal length of the tube, wherein individual ones of the plurality of damper members are axially spaced from one another along the center member and each one extends in a radial direction away from the center member toward an inside diameter of the tube on substantially only one 180 radius of the center member such that the damper member itself lacks substantial coverage of a cross section of the tube;

filling the tube with the solid particles, wherein the solid particles contact the plurality of damper members;

removing the loading tool from the tube as the solid particles fill the tube;

breaking the center member into sections as the loading tool is removed from the tube; and

utilizing a sensor to communicate the position of a second portion of the center member to a first portion of the center member.

22. (Previously Presented) A method for distributing solid particles into a tube, comprising:

positioning a loading tool in an interior of the tube, the loading tool having a center member and a plurality of damper members connected to the center member

and arranged on the center member to provide substantially circumferential coverage along a longitudinal length of the tube, wherein individual ones of the plurality of damper members are axially spaced from one another along the center member and each one extends in a radial direction away from the center member toward an inside diameter of the tube on substantially only one 180 radius of the center member such that the damper member itself lacks substantial coverage of a cross section of the tube;

filling the tube with the solid particles, wherein the solid particles contact the plurality of damper members;

removing the loading tool from the tube as the solid particles fill the tube;

breaking the center member into sections at an eyelet and mating shackle within the center member as the loading tool is removed from the tube; and

utilizing a sensor to communicate the position of a second portion of the center member to a first portion of the center member.

23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein at least one damper member is rotationally distinct from adjacent damper members on both sides thereof.

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a size of the loop is adjustable to accommodate the distribution of different sized solid particles.

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the loop includes a substantially horizontal orientation relative to the longitudinal axis of the center member.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the plurality of damper members are arranged on the center member to provide substantially circumferential coverage along a longitudinal length of the tube.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 26, wherein individual ones of the plurality of damper members are axially spaced from one another along the center member.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the loop extends in a radial direction on substantially only one 180 degree radius of the center member such that the damper member itself lacks substantial coverage of a cross section of the tube.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the loop includes a substantially horizontal orientation relative to the longitudinal axis of the center member.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the plurality of damper members are arranged on the center member to provide substantially circumferential coverage along a longitudinal length of the tube

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein individual ones of the plurality of damper members are axially spaced from one another along the center member.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the loop extends in a radial direction on substantially only one 180 degree radius of the center member such that the damper member itself lacks substantial coverage of a cross section of the tube.